



**CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM**

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, California 95814

**(916) 657-2666**  
FAX **(916) 654-9780**

March 4, 1999

Thomas J. Graff, Senior Attorney  
Environmental Defense Fund  
5655 College Avenue, Suite 304  
Oakland, CA 94618-1583

Steve Johnson, Project Director  
The Nature Conservancy  
1540 River Park Drive, #201  
Sacramento, CA 95815

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter in late 1998 regarding implementation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) and other issues. I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter.

Our responses to your issues and recommendations are based on information contained in the Revised Phase II Report (December 18, 1998), the Strategic Plan for Ecosystem Restoration (December 1998), the most current version of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, which has recently been released, and other CALFED Program documents. Our response to the issues and recommendations raised in your letter follow.

Issue 1. Provisions to assure the effective implementation of the ERP are being developed at the policy level and will continue to include stakeholder involvement. Some of the primary tools for assuring effective implementation include adaptive management, financing, governance, and the Conservation Strategy. The use of a well-founded adaptive management process and several levels of continuous scientific review throughout implementation is key to achieving ERP objectives. Development of an effective governing structure to implement the ERP and adequate financing are key. The Conservation Strategy for the overall CALFED long-term Program will also assure effective implementation. Endangered Species Permits for construction, operation, and maintenance for the Program will be predicated on implementation and progress toward meeting the strategic goals and objectives of the ERP. Finally, bundling of CALFED actions/programs will help assure that all programs progress in a balanced manner. CALFED is working to identify bundles and will work with stakeholders for input in the process.

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**CALFED Agencies**

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**California**  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Fish and Game  
Department of Water Resources  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
State Water Resources Control Board

**Federal**  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Department of Commerce  
National Marine Fisheries Service

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Issue 2. There is little fundamental disagreement that water flows have differing environmental values under different hydrological conditions. Clearly, the diversion of 1,000 cfs from a 100,000 cfs flow event is much less likely to have a severe environmental impact than during a 10,000 cfs event. Still, we observe the scientific disagreement over the relative impact of using storage to modify hydrology. It is our intent to convene the first in a series of scientific evaluations on the ecological value of seasonal stream flow this spring. Our interest is to provide a forum for experts in the fields of hydrology, stream morphology, and ecology to discuss and debate these types of water related issues. Our objective is consensus on the best method to determine streamflow priorities. In addition, we are considering the value of using a proposed storage site as a case study to understand the operational scenarios and their possible impacts on streamflow.

Issue 3. We agree with the need for a comprehensive water acquisition strategy. The focus of this discussion is within the DEFT/No-Name Coordination Team (DNCT) with regard to an Environmental Water Account (EWA), and the water acquisition subgroup of the Ecosystem Roundtable has agreed to increase their activity. We would appreciate any help either of you could offer.

Recommendation 1. As you are aware, the planning time frame for the ERP and the other CALFED common programs has been extended. During this extension, we fully expect to convene the Scientific Review panel to again assess the degree to which we have incorporated their initial recommendations regarding the ERP. We initially were planning to host the panel this spring but have received several suggestions that we delay the spring meeting until later in the summer or early fall.

We are in the process of formulating, with stakeholder assistance, a process to review the ERP draft Stage 1 actions. To assess the merits of the draft Stage 1 actions, we believe this assessment needs to be comprehensive and include integration of the Restoration Coordination (Category III) projects, other agency restoration projects, and monitoring and research programs related to the Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program (CMARP). The Strategic Plan Core Team review will be an important step in this process.

Recommendation 2. Some progress has been made in the important area of indicators of ecological health. The Environmental Defense Fund hosted an Indicator Workshop late last fall and the product of that meeting looks favorable. In addition, the development of CMARP included the presentation of narrative conceptual models and a listing of indicators

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and performance measures to assess specific ecosystem elements such as shallow water habitats and chinook salmon. Still, we agree that the suite of ecological indicators need to be refined, and this is a critical ERP work effort in 1999.

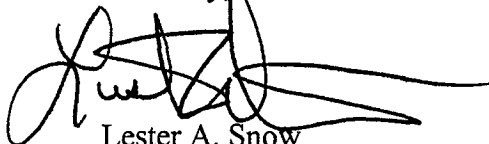
Recommendation 3. We think it may be more appropriate to express the staged implementation/staged decision-making process for the ERP in terms of adaptive management. Please correct us if you disagree, but the adaptive management design for the ERP includes the definition of problems, establishing ecosystem goals and objectives, preparing conceptual models, initiating restoration actions and research program, assessing and evaluating results, and reassessing the problems and goals. The output from the ERP (the degree to which we have improved ecological health of the system) is perhaps the most important element in the staged implementation/staged decision-making process for the remainder of the CALFED Program.

Recommendation 4. We agree and refer you to our earlier comment regarding your Issue 2.

Recommendation 5. As an essential part of our Science Program, we intend to initiate a series of workshops late this spring or early summer. Our plan is to bring together scientists from several disciplines to help up pursue a science-based method for determining streamflow needs. Once the method for determining needs is agreed to by the scientific community, we will use existing standards and regulatory requirements, the provisions of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, the Environmental Water Account, and water acquired for the ERP to meet these needs.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the Ecosystem Restoration Program. It is an immense program that must squarely address the most pressing ecological issues. As usual, I find your comments probing, thoughtful, and challenging. I appreciate your interest and continuing support toward a successful outcome for our program. Should you require additional information and clarification, please contact Dick Daniel at (916) 657-0199 or myself at (916) 657-2666.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lester A. Snow', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director